

## SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2009, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

## THE IMMIGRATION OVERSIGHT AND FAIRNESS ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. ROYBAL-ALLARD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act, which will help address the shameful state of immigration detention in our country.

It is unconscionable that our government holds families in conditions reserved for hardened criminals, forces children caught on their own to spend harrowing nights in border jails and incarcerates in bare cells asylum seekers who came to these shores in search of freedom. These inexcusable abuses should never have happened, and Americans never should have tolerated them.

By strengthening existing regulations and giving them the force of law, the Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act will help ensure that the Department of Homeland Security does not violate its own detention standards.

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My bill ensures that all detainees can communicate with their lawyers and obtain needed medical care. It will also help to expand legal orientation programs so that detainees understand their rights and the likelihood of winning their cases.

The Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act also protects vulnerable children who are arrested on their own and held in DHS custody at border stations. A recent report by the Women's Refugee Commission found that the Border Patrol continues to hold unaccompanied immigrant children in inappropriate conditions. This bill increases training for the Border Patrol officers and facilitates speedy transfers of children to safer, better-equipped facilities.

In addition, the bill expands the use of alternatives to detention. It costs the American taxpayer nearly \$2 billion a year to house detainees, yet the vast majority of detained immigrants pose no threat to their communities or our country. This legislation will make it possible for vulnerable populations—including asylum seekers, torture victims, families, pregnant women, and the elderly—to be released using secure, proven methods of supervision that come at a fraction of the cost of incarceration.

Addressing the problems that plague our detention facilities will require a new commitment to openness and transparency. This bill, therefore, has oversight and accountability provi-

sions which will shine a much-needed light on a system that, for too long, has operated in the shadows.

Because it introduces sensible reforms to correct the many failings of immigration detention in this country, the Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act has garnered broad-based support. More than 100 faith, human rights, civil liberties, immigrant and community organizations have signed a letter endorsing my bill. I would like to specifically thank the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, and the National Immigrant Justice Center for the important role they played in formulating this legislation and for the tireless work they do every day on behalf of immigrant detainees.

Mr. Speaker, the detention system in which thousands of detainees languish daily—frequently denied access to loved ones, legal counsel, and medical care—is incompatible with our laws and inconsistent with our American values.

The Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act will ensure that our government honors its most sacred obligations: to respect our laws and to protect the children entrusted to its care.

I look forward to working with the Obama administration to fix America's broken immigration system, and I ask my colleagues to support the Immigration Oversight and Fairness Act.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. POE of Texas addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

## COMMISSION WITH TEETH: FORCING CONGRESS TO ADDRESS ENTITLEMENT ISSUE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, today the President released his budget request which projects a \$1.8 trillion deficit this year and a \$533 billion deficit for 2013. Yet, the Congressional Budget Office ran a deficit projection using a baseline which assumed the policies in the President's budget request contends that the FY 2013 deficit will be a staggering \$715 billion.

President Obama's pledge of cutting the deficit in half is important, but it will still be at record levels. In this morning's Washington Post, Maya MacGuineas, president of the bipartisan Committee For a Responsible Federal Budget, said she would like "To see them [the Obama Administration] go much further in terms of fiscal responsibility in actually closing that deficit gap."

More to the point, Brian Riedl, budget analyst for the Heritage Foundation,

says, "It is easy to cut the deficit in half after you've quadrupled it."

Today's Politico features an article titled, "Arguments Lost in Blizzard of Billions," which contends—and I agree—that Congress is so desensitized to numbers that "a billion here, a billion there, pretty soon you're talking about—well, pretty soon no one has a clue what you're talking about."

Have we forgotten that we have over \$56 trillion in unfunded obligations through Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid—already saddled on the back of future generations—\$11 trillion of debt? Do elected officials know that Standard and Poor's Investment Service predicts the loss of America's triple-A bond rating as early as 2012?

When Secretary of State Clinton was in Beijing last week, she asked the Chinese—who now holds the paper of about 1 of every 10 American dollars—to keep buying our debt. I never thought I would see the day when the United States was forced to hold a tin cup in China mortgaging the future for our children and our grandchildren to some of the worst human rights violators in the world.

We are in a crisis today. Main Street is suffering. Americans everywhere understand our country is in serious trouble—we are sinking—and it is on this Congress' watch. The 111th Congress is doing nothing.

Confidence. The definition of "confidence," according to Webster's Dictionary, is "faith or the belief that one will act in a right, proper, or effective way." "Act" being the key word.

Americans are under the belief that elected officials will work together to solve the Nation's most pressing problem. But if Congress is paralyzed by partisan bickering, what happens to the word "act"?

Entitlement spending and the massive debt we're leaving to our children and our grandchildren are pressing issues of economic and moral—this is a moral issue. The Tenth Commandment says, "Thou shalt not steal." Well, this generation is stealing from the next generation. Every day the canyon of debt widens and deepens, and yet elected leaders—many hiding behind the mantra of regular order—seem to think the problem will magically go away. The fact is, congressmen give speeches and say, "I'm all for this. I'm concerned. But let's go through regular order."

When it goes through regular order and it goes through the Budget Committee, when it goes through regular order and it goes through the Ways and Means Committee, it is dead. This Ways and Means Committee this year will not act unless they're forced to act by changing the process.

With that, Mr. Speaker, we have to act to get control of our debt for our children and our grandchildren.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.